

Frequently Asked Questions for the State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies

Q1. In what format should the Strategy be submitted and where should it be sent?

A1. The State should send two hard copies of the Strategy to their Regional Fish and Wildlife Service Office in care of their Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs (see attached list). These copies should have holes punched so they can be placed in a 3-ring binder; do not include binders. The State should also send the Regional Office an electronic copy of the Strategy on a CD in Adobe Acrobat 6 format. Additionally, the State should send a duplicate electronic copy on a CD to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Federal Assistance
Attn: Genevieve Pullis LaRouche
4401 N. Fairfax Drive
MBSP-4020
Arlington, VA 22203

Q2. How should the State submit maps that do not fit unfolded in the 3-ring binders?

A2. The State can attach maps of any size to accompany the hard copies of the Strategy. Attached maps should be clearly marked with the State name.

Q3. How should the State submit interactive web features or data bases that do not fit in the 3-ring binders?

A3. The State can include a printed example of the interactive feature or data base with an explanation and instructions on how to access it. Access can be through a website or an accompanying CD. Access to the web site will be the State's responsibility and it must be readily accessible to the National Advisory Acceptance Team (NAAT) to be considered part of the Strategy.

Q4. Should the Strategy summarize how it has met the Eight Elements?

A4. Yes. The Strategy should include a brief summary or "element guide" that describes, for each element #1 through #8, (a) where (what pages) in the Strategy the State focuses on these elements, and (b) how (in what manner) the State has chosen to fulfill the requirement for each element. It should include explanations for any unusual features in the Strategy, such as Strategy appendices or related reports or plans, which the State agency feels compelled to explain to the NAAT members to facilitate their

understanding and review. This summary should be attached to the official submission letter (see question 15).

Q5. Should the Strategy address all species groups, even those outside the State agency's wildlife jurisdiction, such as insects?

A5. Yes. The Strategies are intended to be comprehensive documents for all wildlife in a state, regardless of authorization. States may include all species groups, regardless of authorization, in their Strategy that they deem appropriate. For example, if a State has limited information about a species group they can include a narrative description of how they are starting work on collecting and identifying this information for future revisions of the Strategy. Existing species or habitat management plans may be incorporated by reference with a brief summary included in the Strategy.

Q6. Should the Strategy include a list of species of greatest conservation need?

A6. Yes. This list will meet the requirements of the first of the 8 elements mandated by Congress

Q7. Should the Strategy address marine species, including marine mammals in the Strategy?

A7. Yes. However, if another agency has jurisdiction over these species then the Strategy may incorporate the other agency's management or conservation plans by reference. For example, species harvested 3 miles offshore or greater and covered under NOAA management plans could simply be incorporated into the Strategy by reference.

Q8. Should the Strategy include game species that are also species in greatest conservation need?

A8. Yes. Species that are hunted or fished and are in great need of conservation can be included on a State's species list. Examples of these species might include woodcock, northern pintail, sage grouse, cutthroat trout, and mountain goat.

Q9. Can the Strategy include plants?

A9. Congress' definition of "wildlife" in the legislation did not include plants, however; a State may choose to incorporate plants in the development of the Strategy.

Q10. May the Strategy include conservation actions, such as wildlife education, recreation, and law enforcement that are not eligible for funding under the State Wildlife Grants program?

A10. Yes. Funding for such conservation actions could come from sources other than State Wildlife Grants.

Q11. Should the Strategy include conservation actions that cannot be funded by the State agency alone?

A11. Yes. The Strategy's conservation actions are not intended to be for the State fish and wildlife agency only to carry out. They are the actions that need to be taken to conserve the species and habitats in that state. All conservation partners will potentially contribute to implementing these actions. Additionally, some actions will not require any funding such as new legislation, better compliance with existing regulations, etc.

Q12. Should the Strategy be developed with input from agencies other than the State fish and wildlife agency?

A12. Yes. As required in Element 7 of the 8 Elements, the State fish and wildlife agency should describe how it coordinated input from Federal, State, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas. The National Advisory Acceptance Team expects that the State fish and wildlife agency will make a good faith effort to collaborate with all relevant agencies, organizations and the public in the development of the Strategy, as well as their authorities and abilities to implement Strategy conservation actions.

Q13. Are State Strategies required to address coordination with adjoining States in their Strategies?

A13. No, but many States are working together on common wildlife conservation issues in developing the Strategies including sharing of species lists and comparing drafts to look for commonality and consistency. States are encouraged to continue to coordinate and while States may wish to, they are not required to address this coordination with neighboring States in their Strategies.

Q14. To what degree should States bordering Canada and Mexico coordinate with these countries?

A14. Describing collaboration with adjacent countries is not a required element. However, if species of conservation need and their habitats are shared with these countries, then Strategies would benefit from this information and any identified joint conservation actions.

Q15. Should the Strategy have an official letter accompany its submission?

A15. Yes. A letter, signed by the Director or Administrator for the State fish and wildlife agency, responsible for submission of the Strategy, should accompany the Strategy.

Q16. Can a State submit a Strategy prior to the October 1, 2005 due date?

A16. Yes. All States are encouraged to submit their Strategies as soon as possible and certainly by the October 1, 2005 due date. The NAAT will be meeting several times in 2005 to complete their review of received Strategies. Here is a list of tentative NAAT meeting times with suggested advance Strategy submission dates to ensure inclusion:

<u>Strategy Submission Date</u>	<u>NAAT Review Meeting Week</u>
February 21	April 4
May 30	July 11
July 4	August 15
August 8	September 19

The reviews of Strategies received after August 1 will likely be completed in October or November.

Q17. What are the consequences a state of not submitting the Strategy by October 1, 2005?

A17. The State is no longer entitled to receive newly apportioned funds from the State Wildlife Grants Program. This direction comes from Congress' House Interior Appropriations Committee.

Q18. Once a final Strategy is submitted, when will the NAAT and Director provide a decision to the State?

A18. The National Advisory Acceptance Team is committed to providing as timely a review as possible. The NAAT intends to do a thorough job in reviewing all 56 Strategies and making recommendations to the Director. The Director will in turn send a

letter to the States informing them of his decision. We anticipate that this process will not take more than two months, but that will depend upon the total number of other Strategies being reviewed concurrently and existing workload. The NAAT will work with States to accommodate specific timing/scheduling issues.

Q19. Will there be a formal review of draft Strategies through the Development Assistance Team?

A19. No. There is no formal review process through the Development Assistance Teams. States may ask the Fish and Wildlife Service Development Assistance Team point persons (list attached) for feedback at any time during the process and are encouraged to ask partners to review the Strategies before submission.

Q20. Can a draft Strategy be submitted to the National Advisory Acceptance Team for review and comment?

A20. No. Once the State has finalized the document, it should be submitted in final form to the National Advisory Acceptance Team (NAAT) for review. The NAAT will make a recommendation to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service on whether to approve, disapprove or conditionally approve the Strategy.

Q21. What happens if the Strategy is conditionally approved by the Director?

A21. If the Strategy is conditionally approved, then the State will have six months after receipt of the Fish and Wildlife Service Director's letter to resubmit a revised Strategy for approval. During those six months, the State is eligible to receive State Wildlife Grants Program funds, including continuing to obligate funds through new grant actions. This direction comes from Congress' House Interior Appropriations Committee.

Q22. What happens if the Strategy is disapproved by the Director?

A22. If the Strategy is disapproved, the State is no longer entitled to receive newly apportioned funds from the State Wildlife Grants Program. Should the State elect to submit a revised Strategy in the future, it may do so but, until a Strategy is approved, the State will not be entitled to receive any new apportionments from the program.

Q23. If a Strategy is conditionally approved or disapproved by the Director, will the Fish and Wildlife Service identify what improvements are necessary?

A23. Yes. The letter from the Fish and Wildlife Director will contain a summary, prepared by the NAAT, which describes areas that need improvement. The Service will also be available to help the State through its Regional Development Assistance Team. Revised Strategies will then be resubmitted to the NAAT for review and recommendation to the Fish and Wildlife Director.

Q24. Will the Strategy meet the commitments by States and Territories to develop a "wildlife conservation strategy" required by the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program as well as the "comprehensive wildlife conservation plan" required by the State Wildlife Grants program?

A24. Yes. When a Strategy is approved, the Fish and Wildlife Service Director will send the State a letter that acknowledges that both commitments have been met.

Q25. How does the National Advisory Acceptance Team's Review Guide relate to Congressional requirements?

A25. The Review Guide's intent is to explain how the National Advisory Acceptance Team will be applying the Congressionally required Eight Elements.

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